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The French armament firms and the Spanish market, 1948–75

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This article examines the evolution of French–Spanish military relations during the major part of General Franco’s government in Spain. Special attention is given to the sales of arms and licences for manufacturing them in Spain. During the Cold War, Spain was part of the western bloc, led by the US. Nevertheless, the country’s military equipment was not only supplied by US armament firms, but also by French ones, proving the limits to *Americanisation* in this sector. After several decades of contacts and negotiations between (mainly state-owned) French and Spanish companies, the most important results appeared at the beginning of the 1970s, being consolidated and extended during the democratic period.

Keywords: French–Spanish military relations; Franco regime; armament industry; armament firms

International military relations concentrated huge diplomatic and financial effort in the twentieth century. During the Cold War, the US and the USSR created enormous military–industrial complexes in which they developed a wide variety of conventional and nuclear arms.¹ In spite of its dictatorial government and its economic backwardness, Spain was part of the western bloc and therefore participated in the general process of *Americanisation* that spread throughout the Old Continent from the end of the 1940s onward (Barjot, 2002; Barjot & Réveillard, 2002; Barjot, Lescent-Giles, & Ferrière Le Vayer, 2002; Kipping & Bjarnar, 1998; Kipping & Titatsoo, 2002; Schröter, 2005). Spain followed the European pattern, that is, it did not stick to simply imitating American methods but it selected certain types of procedures, adapted them, and fit them to European, mainly French, formulas (Puig & Álvaro, 2004; Sánchez, 2002).

During General Franco’s dictatorship (1939–75), the Spanish armament industry developed under the wing of the public sector, above all in the old National Institute of Industry (Instituto Nacional de Industria, INI). This public holding, inspired and run mainly by military engineers, was created in 1941 to accelerate Spain’s industrialisation and achieve the highest degree of self-sufficiency. But the managers of the INI soon realised that Spanish industry was not in a condition to achieve self-sufficiency, given its enormous technological backwardness. Their companies had to resort to the technical and financial assistance of European and US

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companies, obtaining, with preferential treatment, import licences, investment authorisation, and the foreign currency necessary to buy foreign products and services. The first supplies arrived from Germany, the fruit of Franco's and Hitler's ideological affinity. Once World War II had ended and the Cold War had begun, the US included Spain in its defence mechanism against communism, delivering additional military equipment. In the 1960s, when the international community had finally accepted the Franco regime and the Spanish economy showed clear signs of growth, the French arms-producing companies tried to snatch fragments of the Spanish market away from the US companies, and they succeeded.

The French armament firms also remained closely linked to the government. They entered their golden age during General De Gaulle's presidency (1958–69). De Gaulle broadly financed the national arsenal and supported exports (with credits, insurance, tax breaks, etc.) because of the economic and political benefits that this involved. On the one hand, this guaranteed the development of the French armaments industry, that is, the use of foreign currency to render the vast investments profitable. On the other hand, it reaffirmed France's national independence (and thus its world influence) with respect to the two superpowers, an independence that had already been expressed in episodes such as producing the atomic bomb (1960) and withdrawal from the integrated command structure of NATO (1966). The US tried to control the foreign activity of the European armament industries, but disagreements with its allies within NATO forced it to adopt a much more permissive attitude (Segreto, 2001). The French multinationals, based on shorter and more specialised production (Piore & Sabel, 1984) and able to exploit old external networks (Valdalisio & López, 2007), recovered their competitive capacity and obtained important benefits of access to the younger markets of the European periphery, such as Spain.

Since the end of the 1960s, France had held third place, after the US and the USSR, in the world ranking of arms-exporting countries. The largest volume of sales was divided between two public companies, Sud-Aviation and SNECMA (Société Nationale d'Études et de Construction de Moteurs d'Avions), and three private ones: Dassault, which manufactured airplanes; Matra, which made missiles; and Turbomeca, which mass-produced airplane motors. A good many of the countries receiving French arms were developing countries with totalitarian regimes.² The French government often claimed it was necessary not to place political conditions on the sales of arms, in order to increase foreign demand.³ Paradoxically, French military equipment was good enough to compete with US equipment on international markets thanks to US aid. In the early post-war period, the Marshall Plan helped reconstruct the French economy, solved the basic needs of the population, and made it possible to divert resources for producing arms. Later, in the context of worsening East–West tensions, and, above all, during the Indochina War, the US supplied the French Army with valuable army equipment and gave important technical and financial aid to industries manufacturing products for the defence sector (Bossuat, 1992; Dauchelle, 2002, 2006; Vial, 1996).

Today, historians and economists coincide in pointing out that military spending had both positive and negative effects on economic growth. The armament industry generated innovations that were valid for the civil sector (for example, transport infrastructure), but it also withdrew resources from the production, import, and consumption of essential goods, as well as increasing debt, dependency, and world

insecurity (Laurance, 1992; Léger, 2006; Segreto, 1993; Viñas, 1985). Both Spain and France devoted a large relative percentage of their public spending to military ends. For Franco's Spain, the benefits were, above all, political ones.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the evolution of French–Spanish military links from 1948 to 1975, paying special attention to the sales of arms. The first section provides a brief historical overview of French–Spanish relations during the Franco regime. After that, military contacts undertaken in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s are considered. The final section presents the main results of this military cooperation, which ended in several agreements signed at the beginning of the 1970s. The case of Spanish–French military relations proves that there were limits to *Americanisation* in peripheral and developing countries (such as Spain), in which the US ran into competition from European powers (such as France). The military equipment of Spanish industry was not only due to the US, but also to France. As we intend to prove throughout these pages, the French companies managed to defeat the American ones for two essential reasons. The first reason was the French and Spanish governments' common desire to reduce dependency on the number one world power. The second was French industry's ability to offer products similar (in quality more than in price) to the American ones while simultaneously contributing to the development of Spanish national industry (by means of co-manufacturing agreements and authorisations for sales to third countries).

In general, arms exports are characterised by obscurity in terms of sources. This obscurity was even greater during the Franco regime. The international yearbooks corresponding to these years give nothing more than the country they were bound for and the products exported (e.g. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [SIPRI], 1950–75). Customs statistics do not distinguish between civil and military products, so the heavy arms (transport aircraft, helicopters, armoured vehicles, patrol boats, frigates, corvettes, missiles, etc.) that made up the majority of the French exports to Spain are included under the general headings of 'capital goods', 'machines and electrical apparatus', or 'automobiles and other vehicles' (Banque de France, 1939–75; Ministerio de Comercio, 1939–75). These conditions make it tremendously difficult to effect quantitative analyses. As it is difficult to know the exact export figures, this text will focus on analysing the negotiation processes, selecting the main actors (governments and enterprises), and presenting the most notable advances in French–Spanish military cooperation.

The French–Spanish relationship during the Franco regime

When General Franco came to power in 1939, relations between France and Spain underwent significant changes. France did not participate in the Spanish Civil War, but helped the Republican side with consignments of Soviet military equipment and the organisation of the International Brigades. Nor did Spain participate in World War II, but it openly proclaimed its ideological proclivity toward fascism, sent the *División Azul* to fight next to the Nazis, and made many other gestures in favour of the Axis powers. As World War II proceeded and it became clear that the Allies would win, Spain insisted on its supposed neutrality and tried to approach Great Britain, the US, and Free France. But this attitude came late and with too many reservations. It was no use.

Thus, in 1945, Franco's Spain faced an openly hostile foreign panorama, where the winning countries hurried to make Spain pay for supporting fascism. As a result,

Spain was excluded from the mechanisms of international cooperation, such as the Marshall Plan and the OEEC, which ensured the reconstruction and reconciliation of Western Europe. Democratic France became one of the strongest supporters of Spain's international ostracism, pressuring other countries to veto Spain's entry into the UN, recommending the application of international sanctions against Franco, and unilaterally ordering the closure of the Pyrenees border between 1946 and 1948 (Brundu, 1984; Busturia, 1994; Dulphy, 2002; Étienvre & Urquijo, 1989; Martínez, 1985; Portero, 1989).

But this international censure of the Franco regime did not last too long. The recrudescence of the Cold War, together with the crisis of the exiled Republican opposition, led Western powers to banish their ideological objections to the Franco regime and to focus on Spain's strategic position, its anti-communism, and its economic potential. In 1953, the US and Spain signed a treaty, initially for a ten-year period,⁴ making Spain a military ally and the object of economic and technical aid. In exchange for aid, the US established bases and other military infrastructures on the Iberian Peninsula. The 1953 Pact supplied less aid than the Marshall Plan, both in quantity and in quality, and it also involved serious cuts to the Spanish state's sovereignty. Nevertheless, the American assistance marked a turning point in Spain's political and economic history: it contributed to the international recognition of the Franco regime, provided currency for the battered Spanish economy, and improved the climate of business confidence, favouring an increase in national and foreign investment (Delgado & Elizalde, 2005; Puig & Álvaro, 2004; Viñas, 2003).

The French authorities also ended up acknowledging the need to place *realism before ideology* in their relationship with Spain (Dulphy, 2002). In 1948 they reopened the Pyrenees border, admitting that their decision, not seconded by any other country, had produced effects contrary to what they had expected: the dictatorship had not been weakened and, more importantly, French economic interests in Spain had been seriously endangered. So the French authorities learned the lesson. They ceased to consider the disappearance of the Franco regime as a precondition to normalising bilateral relations and they strengthened their approach to Spain. This rapprochement was expressed by signing several commercial, financial, and cultural agreements, by a common strategy to stop Moroccan expansionism in Northern Africa, and by collaboration to control the activities of the anti-Franco groups that had taken refuge in France.

Several sectors of French society had justified the Franco regime even in the years when international condemnation was at its height. Centre-right political groups, conservative intellectuals, military hierarchies, and financial and business groups had, more or less clearly, helped finance the 1936 military putsch and then pressured the French government to normalise relations with Franco's Spain. Some of these groups, suspicious of the old reforms of the *Front Populaire* and feeling nostalgic about Vichy, were sympathetic to a regime that offered authoritarian means to fight communism and renew the state in an ordered and disciplined framework. Others, against fascism and dictatorial political systems, shared, at least partly, the conservative, Catholic, and anti-communist values that Franco proclaimed. But above any ideological consideration, these sectors gave priority to common sense and opportunism, that is, to the importance of the geographical situation and mainly the development potential of the Spanish economy.

The French-Spanish rapprochement received a strong boost at the end of the 1950s, coinciding with General De Gaulle's rise to power and the beginning of the

Fifth Republic in France. At that time, French socio-economic expansion, with its roots deep in the recent post-war period, had achieved a solid structural position. In Spain, American assistance, in addition to the resounding failure of the autarkic project, had paved the way for the progressive liberalisation of the economy. The 1959 Stabilization Plan and entry into important international economic organisations (OEEC, IMF, World Bank, etc.) allowed Spain to participate in Western economic growth. Nevertheless, the economic gap between the two countries persisted.

During De Gaulle's presidency, French–Spanish political relations stagnated, but the economic ones progressed greatly. Notwithstanding the persistence of a dictatorship in Spain, the country became part of the global plan designed by De Gaulle and his advisers to increase France's economic power and political and cultural influence worldwide (the *Grandeur*). Top-level visits increased, studies on the Spanish economy and culture multiplied, there was growing French involvement in Spanish management training, etc. The results were spectacular. Starting in the 1960s, there was a sustained increase in French–Spanish commercial exchanges, above all in French exports to Spain, mainly of capital goods. There was also a growing participation of French capital and technicians in the Spanish industrialisation process, particularly in the automobile, mining, iron and steel, and food sectors, as well as in activities related to banking, insurance, and the property market. Finally, there was a continuous movement of people from one side of the Pyrenees to the other: Spanish emigrants on their way to France and French tourists on their way to Spain, who contributed a significant amount of foreign currency to the Spanish balance of payments. French capital, together with that of other Western powers such as the US and West Germany, contributed to the 'Spanish economic miracle' of that period (Puig & Castro, 2006; Sánchez, 2006a).

Therefore, during the Franco regime, French–Spanish relations evolved from distance due to ideological motives to rapprochement deriving from practical considerations. However, despite all this progress, France's and Spain's degrees of economic development and weight on the international scene continued to be quite different. The result was that, except for very specific moments, it was France that marked the guidelines in the evolution of bilateral relations, including military ones.

1948–69: preparing the way for bilateral military cooperation

The Army was one of the main pillars of the Franco regime. In general terms, especially at the beginning of the dictatorship, it was a monolithic and conservative entity, in which nationalistic, Catholic, anti-communist and anti-liberal values dominated, as well as a great deal of discipline and an almost religious fervour towards Franco. Even though military spending made up a high percentage of Spain's total public expenditure, the technical backwardness of the military sector remained throughout the dictatorship and was only mitigated by means of foreign aid (Bowen & Alvarez, 2007; Cardona, 2003, 2008; Ministerio de Defensa, 2006; Puell, 2000; Viñas, 2005).

During the first third of the twentieth century, the Spanish Army had received significant quotas of French equipment: light tanks manufactured by Renault, heavy tanks from Schneider, airplane motors from Hispano-Suiza, and other supplies that were mostly used in the Moroccan war.⁵ When the Spanish Civil War began, the French government, led by the socialist Léon Blum, accepted the Republicans'

petition for arms to help them repress the military coup. But in 1937, increasing tension in French society and pressure from the British government led Blum to revise his initial decision, opting first for a non-interventionist policy and later for a *non-intervention relâchée*. This second formula meant an official prohibition on sending war materiel to Spain and, in practice, tolerance of smuggling across the Pyrenees, at least until June 1938, when control was increased (Viñas, 2008).⁶ The majority of the French equipment received by the Spanish Republicans between 1936 and 1938⁷ was obsolete, very costly, and with hardly any easy payment terms. Besides, the equipment lacked munitions, accessories, and replacement parts, and even minimum instructions for set-up and maintenance. The arms sold by the USSR to the legitimate Republican government were much more important, even if they were far fewer than those given to the rebels by Italy and Germany (Borrás, 1981; Howson, 2000; Martínez, 2006; Moradiellos, 2001).

At the end of the Civil War, General Franco and his military advisers implemented an irrational self-sufficiency plan that would damage the Spanish economy until the mid-1950s (Barciela, 2003; Carreras & Tafunell, 2003; Catalán, 1995, 2002; García & Jiménez, 1999; A. Gómez, 2000; González, 1979; Guirao, 1998; Martín & Comín, 1991; San Román, 1999; Viñas, Viñuela, Eguidazu, Fernández Pulgar, & Florensa 1979; among others). Spain's international relations became seriously distorted. In the defence industry, exchanges decreased and foreign investment was totally prohibited. At any rate, the Spanish government continued to acquire foreign arms, especially from Germany, as a precaution against a world conflict and/or a possible Allied invasion, as well as a way to face the hotbeds of anti-Franco resistance scattered around the national territory. Once World War II had ended, the French government made an agreement with the British and US governments to avoid any action that could contribute to increasing Spanish military power. French military officers and businessmen recommended avoiding 'a too-rigorous interpretation of international commitments'⁸ and turning a blind eye to the possible military uses of equipment sent for civil use, as they suspected Great Britain and the US were trying to do.⁹ These military officers and businessmen also pointed out that the sales of arms would not necessarily imply political approval of the purchasing government, and that exports to Spain would lead to important benefits for the French armaments industry, which would recover a position on the Spanish market that 'had previously been very favourable and had unfortunately disappeared since 1936'.¹⁰ They also launched the idea that the Spanish market could be used as a platform for re-exporting products to some Arab and Latin American countries, due to their historical and cultural links with Spain. In order to calm political leaders, the sectors interested in selling arms insisted that this measure would not turn Spain into a military power, but would only contribute to integrate Spain into the Western defence system and thus ensure its usefulness in case of war.

At first, the French authorities responded negatively. Recently freed from the German occupation, conditioned by the pressure of public opinion, fearing to reinforce Spanish troops in Northern Africa, and lacking proof confirming the supposed British and US activities, they de-authorised the exportation to Spain of any equipment that could be used in war operations. Nevertheless, they allowed the resumption of military contacts 'with as little publicity as possible',¹¹ through the exchange of visits and sojourns, the concession of reciprocal authorisations for fly-overs and stop-overs in the other country's territory, and the execution of market studies to evaluate the situation of the Spanish defence industry.¹² The French

government kept in mind the lesson from the 1946–48 border closure and was aware of the difficulty of distinguishing between equipment for strictly civilian use and that meant for military operations.¹³ The renewal of military contacts with no arms transfer would ensure the fulfilment of a double objective:

To respect international commitments ..., but at the same time to prepare the terrain for when the political field becomes free ... and to avoid the risk that the Allies, better placed than we are, would unilaterally retire the prohibition on selling war materiel to Spain and quickly saturate the market which we will have given up voluntarily.¹⁴

The 1949 French–Spanish commercial agreement, effective in 1950, included aeronautical equipment for the first time after the Civil War, especially Jumo 211 airplane motors recovered from old German airplanes.¹⁵ At the same time, various French companies, such as Rateau and Ateliers et Chantiers de Bretagne, began to give technical assistance to Spanish societies, especially the ones belonging to the INI, for manufacturing radars, turbines, and aeronautic motors.¹⁶ This was, in effect, equipment that could have civilian or military uses.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the members of the French Embassy in Spain prepared detailed reports on the situation of the Spanish Armed Forces. Regarding the Army, all the studies coincided in underlining the precarious equipment, the short range of motorisation and, therefore, its ineffectiveness in defence operations. The Navy also needed a big modernisation effort, above all in detection equipment, and anti-aircraft and anti-submarine weapons. Regarding the Air Force, the reports indicated that it was all but unarmed, because the limited equipment it had was obsolete. In short: ‘the Spanish Armed Forces are in a precarious situation ... their defensive capacity is insignificant and their operative capacity is inexistent ... the country’s resources are insufficient to guarantee their modernisation. Foreign aid is indispensable’.¹⁷

In the summer of 1953, in the midst of negotiations for the Spanish–US Pact, the French National Defence Minister, René Pleven, expressed his willingness to authorise the sale of war materiel to Spain. But his colleague in Foreign Affairs, Georges Bidault, recommended waiting until the agreements with the US were signed and the other European powers had made their positions clear on this matter.¹⁸ The French prohibition was lifted by a unanimous government decision in 1955, that is, right from the moment that the first US supplies reached Spain, specifically for the Air Force and the Navy. These supplies were mostly used World War II and Korean War products which were, nevertheless, very well received by the Spanish troops, given their extreme backwardness. This interest from the US increased the interest of other European powers, such as West Germany, which soon expressed its willingness to build military bases, export weapons, and fund subsidiary arms producers in Spain (Collado, 1991).¹⁹

French military authorities kept a close watch on the negotiations (and renegotiations) of the 1953 Pact (Delgado, 2004; Dulphy, 2002; Sánchez, 2006a, 2006b). Partly thanks to the help of their Spanish counterparts, they gained access to the lists of equipment that the High General Staff of the Spanish Army required, and they gathered detailed information on the evolution of US military presence in Spain: the movements of the 6th Fleet, the installation of troops, the arrival of arms, and the construction of bases and other military infrastructures. As a result, they found out right away about the existence of secret clauses annexed to the Pact that involved serious cutbacks in the sovereignty of the Spanish State, as well as the first

symptoms of unease among Spanish negotiators due to the evident imbalance of Spain–US relations.²⁰ Encouraged by this situation, French leaders decided to intensify their efforts to increase their influence in Spain:

We still have a few months before the Spanish government makes its decision [on the first results of the 1953 Pact]. We must take advantage of this parenthesis to counterattack, give out information about our material, attract potential buyers to our factories, increase the number of demonstrations, prepare the necessary technical documentation in their language. There is a lot to do, and it can be very fruitful if we act quickly and if we are coherent, skilful, and patient, as well.²¹

The military rapprochement between Spain and France intensified due to the cooperation of both countries' armies in Northern Africa. Starting in 1956, the French and the Spanish united to face a common enemy, the Moroccan independence movement, which threatened their respective areas of colonial influence. Among other issues, they agreed to exchange information regularly, to set up joint manoeuvres, and to equip the Spanish troops with French arms, especially since the US had forbidden the use of the arsenal supplied in the framework of the 1953 Pact outside of Spain. In early 1958, a combined military operation, named *Ouragan* and formed by the Spanish operation *Teide* and the French operation *Écouvillon*, allowed them to contain the rebels and sign a provisional ceasefire (Morales, 1998; Ybarra, 1996). The collaboration initiated in Africa was institutionalised and extended in December 1959, when the French and Spanish General Staffs settled on an Air Defence Protocol and an Aerial Logistics Protocol.²²

The link between Spain and the US, institutionalised in 1953, had left a narrow margin for the French to manoeuvre. The pro-US sectors occupied firm positions in the military Ministries and in the High General Staff of the Spanish Army. Arms *made in the USA* equipped the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force almost exclusively. It was very hard to equal the industrial and financial strength of US manufacturers. However, anti-American feelings had started to expand in broad sectors of the government and Spanish society, which were increasingly convinced that the risks undertaken were not compensated by the aid received, and that it was necessary to reduce the enormous dependence on the American superpower (Chislett, 2005). In addition, the Spanish economy had more foreign currency at that time, available from exports, foreign investment, emigrants' remittances and income from tourism (Carreras & Tafunell, 2003; García & Jiménez, 1999; González, 1979; Martín & Comín, 1991; Muñoz, Roldán & Serrano, 1978; Perroux, 1967; Viñas et al., 1979; among others).

The French military authorities took advantage of this situation to intensify their activity in Spain. As a result, official visits of high-ranking French Army officials (such as General Noiret, General Ailleret, Admiral Cabanier) proliferated, as well as invitations for representatives of the Spanish Army to go to France (General Muñoz Grandes, General Díez Alegria, Admiral Nieto Antúnez, for example). The so-called 'reconnaissance missions' sent to Spain also multiplied, such as the missions of the Association Nationale des Officiers de Réserve de l'Armée de l'Air, the Institut des Hautes Études de la Défense Nationale, and the private aviation company Dassault. Joint military manoeuvres became regular affairs, especially naval manoeuvres carried out in Spanish waters, such as *Finisterex* in Galicia, *Atlantide* in the Canary Islands, and *Alcudia* in the Balearic Islands. French ships and airplanes, such as the training ship *Jeanne d'Arc* or the guard ship *L'Aventure*, made increasingly frequent

stops in Spanish ports and airfields, reaching an average of 250 a year. High-ranking representatives of French aeronautics companies (Dassault, Sud-Aviation, SNEC-MA) met regularly with the Air Force Attaché in order to propose deals to the Spanish government and Spanish companies.²³ At the same time, France participated more and more in training Spanish military personnel, especially those who, because of their rank and trajectory, occupied or were destined to occupy positions of responsibility in Spain: outstanding members of the Spanish Army, such as Antonio Barroso Sánchez-Guerra (Minister of the Army from 1957 to 1962) and Ángel González de Mendoza y Dorvier (Director of the Higher Centre of Studies for National Defence from 1964 onwards) did advanced training in prestigious French schools.²⁴ Some French military officers corresponded by attending Spanish centres, more to intensify the network of relations and flatter Spanish pride than to broaden their knowledge in the area of defence.²⁵ At the end of their stay in Spain, the French military personnel had to report to their superiors. In these reports, they often mentioned their hosts' disillusionment and their critical attitude towards the US, as well as their desire to strengthen links with France. This anti-Americanism derived, according to the French, from a mixture of feelings of humiliation and rejection with respect to the US military personnel stationed in Spain, who advertised *everything American* excessively and offensively, only interacted with one another, and did not care about, or even made fun of, Spanish customs. Despite all of this, the members of the French Army usually ended their reports pointing out that Spain neither wanted to nor could do without its alliance with the world leader.²⁶

In this context, the French government encouraged businessmen to propose projects that would rival the US ones in technical, commercial, and financial aspects. And so they did. In order to compete with the US industries, which supplied free equipment or low-interest financing with the Export-Import Bank in exchange for military bases, French industries exploited the chance to contribute to the development of the Spanish national war industry, an aspect that the US generally scorned but which was highly valued by the Spaniards. Furthermore, they proposed signing co-manufacturing agreements, with the commitment that the Spanish part, limited at first to 30–40% and to elementary operations, would progressively increase to the detriment of the French part. Moreover, Spain would have the chance to export equipment manufactured in Spain with French licences and technical assistance to France and to third countries. Finally, collaboration with France would allow Spain to diversify its industrial equipment, to take more compensation for the 1953 Pact, and to get French government support on issues such as entry into the EEC and NATO.²⁷

During the 1960s, Spanish companies, especially those belonging to the INI, received numerous proposals for collaboration from private and public French companies. Specifically, there were contacts with the following institutions: EN (National Company) Bazán de Construcciones Navales Militares (Military Naval Construction), EN Santa Bárbara de Industrias Militares (Military Industries), Construcciones Aeronáuticas SA (CASA, Aeronautic Constructions), EN de Hélices para Aeronaves SA (ENHASA, Airplane Propellers), EN de Motores de Aviación SA (ENMASA, Aviation Motors), Instituto Nacional de Técnica Aeroespacial Esteban Terradas (INTA, National Institute of Aerospace Technology), Agrupación Técnica Española de Constructores de Material Aeroespacial (ATECMA, Spanish Technology Group of Aerospace Material Builders), and Aeronáutica Industrial SA (AISA, Industrial Aeronautics).²⁸ However, only one extensive operation was

concluded in that decade: the construction of four *Daphné*-type submarines at the Bazán factories (Ramírez, 1983).²⁹ This operation was carried out in the framework of a bilateral agreement signed on 10 May 1965 by the French Minister of Defence, Pierre Messmer, and the Spanish Minister of the Navy, Pedro Nieto Antúnez. In the following years, several complementary contracts regulated specific issues of the *Daphné* project, basically the commitments of the construction companies (16 July 1966), licence concessions, technical assistance services, and logistical support for Bazán (2 October 1968), and training in the use and maintenance of the machinery for Spanish personnel (20 October 1969).³⁰ During these years, many other French–Spanish industrial projects were settled, not all of which were strictly military projects, with the express objective of breaking the US monopoly in Spain. Some examples are: the construction of a space station in the Canary Islands for tracking artificial satellites, the sale of 20 *Caravelle* airplanes to Iberia Airlines, and the construction of the Vandellós nuclear power station in Catalonia with French technology. Political interest was the priority in these projects, as both the prior studies and the final results showed that they had fewer technical and economic advantages compared to the rival US projects (Sánchez, 2002, 2006a).

1969–75: obtaining results

The contacts made in the early decades of the Franco regime bore the most fruit in the 1970s (Table 1). In 1970, in the midst of the second (and hard) renegotiation of the 1953 Pact, the head of the High General Staff of the Spanish Army, General Manuel Díaz Alegria, handed France and the US a list of Spain's most urgent needs in the area of arms, a list headed by airplanes and tanks.³¹ France immediately sent its proposal and the Spanish military accepted it, partly because they wanted to have the equipment as soon as possible to send it to the Sahara, and partly because of the pressure from influential pro-French generals, such as Minister of the Air Force Salvador Díaz Benjumea. So just a few months before the second renewal of the Spain–US treaty, Spain and France concluded three important military cooperation agreements.

On 10 February 1970, the new French Minister of Defence and the new Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Michel Debré and Gregorio López Bravo, signed a Technical and Industrial Cooperation Agreement on Aeronautics Material that approved the export of 30 *Mirage III E* jets. These jets would be manufactured in Spain with a French licence and French technical assistance. In the contract, the French government committed itself on three issues: to support the Spanish manufacturing companies (with CASA as the leader), to have the Spanish labour force participate in the manufacturing (6 million work hours out of a total of 13 million), and to guarantee training, in Spain or in France, for engineers, technicians, pilots, mechanics, and other Spanish specialists. The total cost of the operation was estimated at \$90 million. Spain would pay 4% in cash upon signing the contract, and the rest with a loan in 100 monthly payments at a 6.4% rate of interest.³² At that time, the possible concession to Spain of 36 US F4C Phantom jets, with technical characteristics very similar to those of the *Mirage* jets and with better financial conditions for their purchase, was being negotiated. The Spanish Ministry of the Air Force gave the Spanish negotiators orders to 'put off the decision and not answer the US offer until the operation with the French was settled'.³³ The Spanish Air Force Attaché also suggested that they 'try out some political manoeuvres, taking

advantage of the excellent moment in our relations with France'.³⁴ The Spanish authorities' intention to use the February 1970 agreement as an instrument for putting pressure on the US did not go unnoticed, even by Spanish public opinion. Two days after the agreement was signed, the *Pueblo* newspaper editorial alluded to this subject as follows: 'it was not by chance that this operation was concluded a few days before the conversations with the US begin. Multiplying options is essential for any good foreign policy'.³⁵

On 4 June 1970, the French and Spanish governments signed a new Technical and Industrial Cooperation Agreement for co-manufacturing *AMX* tanks, under the supervision of the Direction Technique de l'Armée de Terre. The text pointed out that, on one hand, 19 armoured *AMX 30* tanks would immediately be diverted from the French Army and transferred to the Spanish Army, and, on the other hand, another 180 tanks would be manufactured in Spain, under the direction of Santa Bárbara, over a period of four years.³⁶ The cost of this operation was estimated at \$70 million.³⁷ As in the case of the *Daphné* submarines and *Mirage* jets, in the following years, different complementary agreements regulated issues such as the concession of manufacturing licences and training Spaniards in the use of the equipment supplied. The *AMX* also had competitors. Specifically, its technical characteristics and financial conditions were similar to those of a tank called the *Leopard*, manufactured by the German company Krauss-Maffei and equipped with German–British technology.

On 22 June 1970, just a month and a half before the second renovation of the 1953 Pact, France and Spain signed a General Military Cooperation Treaty, which updated earlier commitments, ratified them through the governments, and extended them to the three branches of the Army.³⁸ This treaty, as well as its annexed protocols,³⁹ framed many contracts for acquiring French equipment (*Agosta* submarines, *Mirage F1* jets, Hotchkiss Brandt cannons, Matra missiles, SNECMA motors, etc.), that arrived in Spain, together with light arms, munitions, and replacement parts, during the democratic period after 1975 (Labatut, 1993).⁴⁰ In exchange for the Spanish purchases, the French agreed to grant easy financial terms, increase the percentage of participation for Spanish national industry, and aid in the sales of Spanish-made arms in France and in other countries. During the Franco regime, Spanish arms exports registered very low indexes. Light arms, munitions, and explosives, manufactured by INI companies and sent to Portugal, Latin America, and Arab countries, stood out.⁴¹ In the 1980s, Spanish sales gained relevance, representing an average of 2% of the total volume of Spanish exports. France monopolised more than half of the total Spanish sales to Europe, thanks to the compensation clauses derived from the sales contracts settled in the 1970s (Fisas, 1991, according to data from the SIPRI and the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency). The main export companies were CASA and AISA. The main export products were fuselages for *Mirage F-1* jets, hydraulic shock absorbers and steering brakes for *AMX* tanks, and various elements for *Super-Puma*, *Gazelle*, and *Alouette* helicopters (Fisas, 1991).

The progress achieved at the close of the Franco regime was no doubt important, even if it did not manage to break Spanish military dependence on the first world power. The fact that, from 1967 to 1976, the US and France monopolised 70.1% and 17.5%, respectively, of the total of Spanish arms imports is proof of this (SIPRI, 1980). During these years, the dispute over Gibraltar prevented Great Britain from taking advantage of the complicated renegotiation of the 1953 Pact, which led Spain

Table 1. Main arms sales operations in Spain, 1948–75.

Date of agreement	Equipment	French manufacturing company	Spanish licensed dealer	Participation for Spanish industry (%)	Cost of operation (\$ m)	Total purchases from France (%)
10/5/1965	4 Daphné submarines (Spanish designation Delfin S-60)	State (Navy)	Bazán	65	–	–
10/2/1970	30 Mirage IIIE jets (Spanish designation C-11 y CE-11)	Dassault	CASA	46	90	36
4/6/1970	199 tanks AMX 30	State (Army)	Santa Bárbara	90	70	28

Source: AMAE-F, SHAT and SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.

to seek alternative sources of military supplies (Labarta, 2005). Besides, the French authorities, still conditioned by the dictatorial nature of the Franco regime, never wanted, at least in theory, to become fully involved in military cooperation with Spain. Thus, they did not support Spain's entry into NATO (Barbé, 1981; Marquina, 1986), saying it was 'unnecessary and counterproductive'.⁴² They did not even support the formalisation of a Mediterranean Pact that would include Spain, France, Italy and, eventually, the Northern African coastal countries. They preferred to develop strictly bilateral types of cooperation and repeatedly insisted on the 'merely technical, not political' natures of French–Spanish military relations.⁴³

Conclusion

The Spanish market was a very attractive destination for French arms-producing companies, despite the political tensions that often hampered bilateral relations. The French governments of the Third and Fourth Republics soon overcame their ideological reticence about sending arms to Spain, and General De Gaulle's government, which began the Fifth Republic, openly supported exports to the other side of the Pyrenees. The main obstacle for French industries was the stiff competition from the US, which had become the main reference for the Spanish government and military since the 1953 Pact. After several decades of contact, France managed to sign several cooperation agreements and sell a series of equipment (jets and tanks, above all), that contributed significant income and increased France's influence in Spain.

After the *impasse* immediately following the war, the Western powers started to become interested in Franco's Spain: the US, because of its advantageous strategic position in the fight against communism, and France, because of the resulting benefits to the French economy. General De Gaulle's government took advantage of the misunderstandings that arose in the Spain–US renegotiations to propose offers to Spain that rivalled the American ones in the area of armaments. For the French

companies, it was simple to equal the quality of American tanks and airplanes, but it was not so simple to equal their quantity, which translated into higher sales prices, longer delivery periods, and fewer easy payment conditions. Because of this, the French played the card of helping to develop Spanish industry, an aspect that was highly regarded by Spain and often disregarded by the US. The co-manufacturing agreements (with a high percentage of participation for Spanish industry), and the authorisation to export to third countries (above all to Latin American countries), made possible the signing of important agreements to supply Spain with French arms. Therefore, *modernisation* was not simply equivalent to *Americanisation* in the Spanish military industry, but was actually a mixed formula with ingredients that were American, European and American-filtered-through-Europe.

From Spain, military cooperation with France was seen to be an excellent opportunity to decrease dependence on the US, to increase the chances to enter the EEC, and, in general, to benefit Spanish–French relations as a whole. That is why military–industrial projects became excellent instruments of foreign policy. The US continued to be the foremost ally of the Franco regime, but Spanish leaders began to consider the French path (and the European path, in general) as a good alternative to the American one. This choice between the US or France continues to be present in foreign action in Spanish politics and economy.

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Notes

1. The literature on the armament industry during the second half of the twentieth century is too voluminous to include in this short paper, even selectively. For a general approach to the subject, see the recent books by Barrillot (2005), Bitzinger (2009), Krishna (2008), Mortal (2007), and Purkayastha (2007).
2. There is also an extensive bibliography on French arms exports in the second half of the twentieth century (see, e.g., Chadeau, 2004; Chesnais & Serfati, 1992; Clican, 1974; Collet, 1988, 1993; Doisse & Vaisse, 1987; Dubos, 1974; Giovachini, 2000; Hébert, 1988; Kolodziej, 1987; Martel, 1994; Pestre, 2005; Sampson, 1978; Thayer, 1971; Vaisse, 2000). In addition, monographs on companies such as Dassault (Bechter, Berger, & Carlier, 2006; Carlier & Berguer, 1996; Vadepiet & Péan, 2003) and on equipment such as the *Mirage* jets (Gee, 1971; Mafé, 1991; Pérez, 1977) can be consulted.
3. Words of the French Minister of National Defence in 1971 (as cited in Soppelsa, 1980).
4. It was extended, with modifications, in 1963 and 1970.
5. R. Gómez (1969), and notes from the Air Force Attaché at the Spanish Embassy in France, several years, in the Archivo Histórico del Ejército del Aire (AHEA), box 12854.
6. Together with arms, the French government also hindered volunteers to the International Brigades from leaving. Nevertheless, French volunteers continued to be the most numerous, making up almost 28% of the total (Skoutelsky, 1998).
7. It is impossible to know the exact quantity (for more details, see Borrás, 1981).
8. Letter from the Military Attaché, Captain Jean Boutron, 4 December 1950, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (SHAT), box 10 T 303.
9. According to the Military Attaché, Captain Christian De Boysson, Great Britain and the US were supplying Spain with navigational radars and aviation motors, 13 July 1952, SHAT, 10T 303.
10. Report by De Boysson, 5 May 1953, SHAT, 14S 59.

11. Note from the Direction de l'Europe, Subdirection de l'Europe Méridionale, 20 June 1950, Archives du Ministère français des Affaires Étrangères (AMAE-F), Europe, Espagne, 1949–60, vol. 139.
12. The evolution of these events can be followed in the monthly reports of the Military Attachés of the French Embassy in Spain (SHAT, 10T 302, 14S 54 to 14S 55) and, less systematically, in the reports of their Spanish counterparts at the Spanish Embassy in France (AHEA, 10940–10952).
13. 'Note au sujet des livraisons de matériel faites à l'Espagne par la France et la Grande-Bretagne', no date or signature, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1949–60, 201.
14. Letters from the Permanent General Secretary of National Defence, 12 September 1950 and 4 December 1950, SHAT, 10T 303.
15. Note from the Direction de l'Europe, Subirection de l'Europe Méridionale, 10 November 1949, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1949–60, 201.
16. Archivo Histórico del Instituto Nacional de Industria (AHINI), box 2663.
17. Informational note from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 February 1953, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1949–60, 140.
18. Letter from René Pleven to Georges Bidault, 27 July 1953, and reply from Georges Bidault, 21 August 1953, SHAT, 10T 303.
19. Note from the Direction Générale des Affaires Politiques, Subdirection d'Europe Centrale, 7 February 1955, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1949–60, 140.
20. Note from the Direction Politique, 25 February 1952, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1949–60, 155.
21. 'Réflexions sur l'Espagne', no signature, 17 November 1953, SHAT, 10T 303.
22. Both Protocols would be renewed in 1965.
23. Reports from the Air Force Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Louis Radisson, 4 December 1969 and 18 February 1970, AHEA, A10960 to 10961.
24. See the archive of *stagiaires* in SHAT, 10T 317.
25. To this end, French *stagiaires* received a series of instructions: not to boast of their experience and knowledge, to avoid acting self-important and superior, to be as discreet as possible, and to show a great interest in the country and its inhabitants. Report by battalion chief Pierre Tavernier at the end of his sojourn at the Spanish Army General Staff School (1957–59), 31 March 1959, SHAT, 14S 59.
26. Report by Captain Azais at the end of his sojourn at the Spanish Army General Staff School (1959–60), 27 June 1960, SHAT, 14 S 59.
27. See the following reports: 'Développement de l'influence des États-Unis en Espagne et ses conséquences pour la France', 4 May 1965, 'La coopération militaire franco-espagnole et les négociations hispano-américaines', 7 July 1969, and 'Relations franco-espagnoles dans le domaine des armements', 22 October 1969. The three can be found in AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, 333 and 354. See also reports from the Spanish Air Force Attaché in AHEA, A10949.
28. Report of the Air Force Attaché, Colonel Charles Delvoye, 27 April 1965, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, 321.
29. Originally, the plan was to manufacture five units, but due to budget problems one was dropped.
30. AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, several volumes, and <http://www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/pacte>
31. Letter from the French Minister of National Defence, 27 May 1970, SHAT, 10T 312.
32. Negotiations and final text in AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, 356.
33. Letter from Radisson, 14 January 1970, AHEA, 10947.
34. Report on the possible acquisition of *Mirage III* jets, 9 July 1969, AHEA, 10940.
35. *Pueblo*, 12 February 1970.
36. The other INI companies that participated in the project were AESA, ENOSA, ENASA, EISA, and Bazán. AHINI, 4578, 4784, 4957 and 5642.
37. Negotiations and final text in AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, 356.
38. Among other aspects, this treaty regulated the following: meetings between Ministers and high-ranking military officers, the execution of joint manoeuvres, reciprocal permission for fly-overs, for navigation, and for stopovers in ports and airports, the establishment of common communications systems, the transfer of technical and

logistical information, official exchanges between military schools, the simplification of administrative procedures for exporting war materials, the guarantee that Spanish industry would participate extensively in the manufacturing processes, and the launching of joint commercial actions for sales to third countries, mainly Latin American countries. Text in AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, 352.

39. Available at <http://www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/pacte>
40. This General Cooperation Treaty remained in force until 1983, which shows its eminently technical nature.
41. Above all, CETME assault rifles, manufactured since 1957 by the Centre of Technical Studies of Special Materials (Centro de Estudios Técnicos de Materiales Especiales, CETME), dependent on the INI. Starting in 1972, Spanish exports were channelled through the DEFEX group, made up of five INI companies (Bazán, Santa Bárbara, CASA, Experiencias Industriales, Óptica) and seven private companies (Esperanza y Cia, Plásticos Oramil, Instalaza, Plasencia de las Armas, Explosivos Alaveses, Star, Unión de Explosivos Río Tinto).
42. Note from the Direction of Political Affairs, Subdirection of Southern Europe, 4 September 1960, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1956–60, 236.
43. Note from the Direction des Affaires Économiques et Financières, 20 October 1970, AMAE-F, Europe, Espagne, 1961–70, 297.

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